

ORTLOFF

ORGAN COMPANY, LLC.

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Dear Mr. Foreman,

Please allow me to introduce myself as an organbuilder, theatre and classical organist, and organ historian and preservationist. Together with a handful of like-minded individuals across the country and world, I am working on an effort to save the Fox Theatre Moller from irreparable alteration.

It has come to our attention that the current organist of the Fox, Ken Double (formerly the ATOS CEO), has convinced the Fox that the Moller console is "unrestorable," and should be replaced, and the original Moller relay should be replaced by a modern, computer-controlled system. As of late last month, we have confirmation that requests for proposals have been sent to four firms in the United States for this work; one of the firms is a major builder of electronic organs. You can just imagine Joe Patten rolling in his grave at the mention of this.

As the largest theatre organ to remain unaltered in its original home, the Moller is incredibly rare, and of tremendous historic value. The Organ Historical Society, the nation's foremost preservation and research organization, awarded the Moller an Historic Organ Award in 2013, deeming it "A Landmark of American Organbuilding." Its historic status is largely due to the fact that it has existed 90 years without major change. The changes being pushed by Mr. Double would strip this historic value away, and in doing so, the signature Fox Moller sound would be lost. Judging from your online publications, I probably don't need to tell you any of this.

The group of concerned individuals includes theatre organists, classical organists, and organ builders and curators. We count among our group the curators of the two largest unaltered pipe organs in the world - the Sydney, Australia Town Hall organ, and the Newberry Memorial Organ at Yale University. We also count among our group organists who have played the Fox Moller in recent years, and dismiss as bunk the notion that the organ needs these radical changes. We are therefore preparing to organize a letter writing campaign to the management of the Fox urging them not to consider this proposal.

What we don't know yet is who at the Fox would be most sympathetic to bring these concerns to initially. We don't want to dump a few dozen letters on the doorstep and upset somebody; we'd rather do it in a more controlled way.

All that said, given your knowledge of the people at the Fox, do you have an idea of who the best person might be to approach?

Many thanks for your help,

Jonathan Ortloff